

Amendments to the Claims

1 Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of handling time-sensitive messages, comprising steps
2 of:

3 marking a message as time-sensitive;

4 sending the marked message to a recipient, such that when the marked message is
5 received at a computing device of the recipient, it will automatically be rendered to the recipient
6 within a time period of the time-sensitivity; and

7 automatically receiving a reply from the recipient regarding the marked message within
8 [[a]] the time period of the time-sensitivity of the marked message.

1 Claim 2 (original): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the marking step further
2 comprises indicating whether snoozing is allowed by the recipient for this message.

1 Claim 3 (original): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the marking step further
2 comprises indicating an ending time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of the message.

1 Claim 4 (original): The method according to Claim 3, wherein the marking step further
2 comprises indicating a starting time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of the message.

1 Claim 5 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2 receiving the marked message at [[a]] the computing device of the recipient;
3 determining whether the time period of the time-sensitivity of the received message has

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4 been reached; and

5 requiring the received message to be rendered to the recipient if so.

1 Claim 6 (original): The method according to Claim 5, further comprising the step of requiring
2 the recipient to respond to the rendered message.

1 Claim 7 (original): A method of improving electronic communications, comprising steps of:
2 receiving a plurality of electronic messages by a recipient to whom the electronic
3 messages are addressed; and
4 evaluating the received electronic messages for processing, further comprising steps of:
5 determining whether a selected one of the received electronic messages is time-
6 sensitive; and
7 requiring the selected one to be rendered to the recipient if so.

1 Claim 8 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the evaluating step further
2 comprises the step of:
3 suppressing the requiring step unless a time period of the time-sensitivity has been
4 reached.

1 Claim 9 (original): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the steps of:
2 determining, when the selected one is time-sensitive and a time period of the time-
3 sensitivity has been reached, whether snoozing is allowed for the selected one; and

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4 if so, delaying the requiring step until a later time, wherein the later time is within the
5 time period of the time-sensitivity.

1 Claim 10 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the evaluating step further
2 comprises the step of:

3 determining, when the selected one is time-sensitive and the time period of the time-
4 sensitivity has been reached, whether snoozing is allowed for the selected one; and

5 if so, allowing the recipient to suppress the requiring step only while (1) a starting time of
6 the time period has been reached but (2) an ending time of the time period has not been reached.

1 Claim 11 (original): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

2 requiring the recipient to create a response to the rendered selected one; and

3 sending the response to a sender of the rendered selected one.

1 Claim 12 (original): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the step of
2 determining whether processing of the rendered selected one is complete, and if not,
3 remembering the rendered selected one for subsequent evaluation at a later time, wherein the
4 later time is within the time period of the time-sensitivity.

1 Claim 13 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the requiring step is suppressed
2 unless (1) a starting time of a time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached and (2) an
3 ending time of the time period of the time-sensitivity has not been reached.

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1 Claim 14 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are e-
2 mail messages.

1 Claim 15 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are
2 electronic calendar events.

1 Claim 16 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are to-
2 do items.

1 Claim 17 (original): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the steps of:
2 determining, when the selected one is time-sensitive and a time period of the time-
3 sensitivity is approaching or has been reached, whether a hierarchy of event notification
4 techniques has been defined for various intervals of time-sensitivity, and if so, selecting a
5 notification technique which corresponds to an amount of time in the time period in addition to
6 or instead of the step of requiring the selected one to be rendered to the recipient.

1 Claim 18 (currently amended): A system for handling time-sensitive messages, comprising:
2 means for marking a message as time-sensitive;
3 means for sending the marked message to a recipient, such that when the marked message
4 is received at a computing device of the recipient, it will automatically be rendered to the
5 recipient within a time period of the time-sensitivity; and

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6 means for automatically receiving a reply from the recipient regarding the marked
7 message within ~~[[a]]~~ the time period of the time-sensitivity of the marked message.

1 Claim 19 (original): The system according to Claim 18, wherein the marking means further
2 comprises means for indicating an ending time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of the
3 message.

1 Claim 20 (original): A system for improving electronic communications, comprising:
2 means for receiving a plurality of electronic messages by a recipient to whom the
3 electronic messages are addressed;
4 means for determining whether a selected one of the received electronic messages is time-
5 sensitive, and if so, whether a time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached; and
6 means for requiring the selected one to be rendered to the recipient if so.

1 Claim 21 (original): The system according to Claim 20, wherein the means for determining
2 further comprises means for determining whether the time period of the time-sensitivity has been
3 exceeded; and wherein the means for requiring is suppressed if the time period of the time-
4 sensitivity has been exceeded.

1 Claim 22 (currently amended): A computer program product for handling time-sensitive
2 messages, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-readable media
3 and comprising:

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4 computer-readable program code means for marking a message as time-sensitive;

5 computer-readable program code means for sending the marked message to a recipient,

6 such that when the marked message is received at a computing device of the recipient, it will

7 automatically be rendered to the recipient within a time period of the time-sensitivity; and

8 computer-readable program code means for automatically receiving a reply from the
9 recipient regarding the marked message within ~~[[a]]~~ the time period of the time-sensitivity of the
10 marked message.

1 Claim 23 (original): The computer program product according to Claim 22, wherein the
2 computer-readable program code means for marking further comprises computer-readable
3 program code means for indicating an ending time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of
4 the message.

1 Claim 24 (original): A computer program product for improving electronic communications, the
2 computer program product embodied on one or more computer-readable media and comprising:

3 computer-readable program code means for receiving a plurality of electronic messages
4 by a recipient to whom the electronic messages are addressed;

5 computer-readable program code means for determining whether a selected one of the
6 received electronic messages is time-sensitive, and if so, whether a time period of the time-
7 sensitivity has been reached; and

8 computer-readable program code means for requiring the selected one to be rendered to
9 the recipient if so.

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1 Claim 25 (original): The computer program product according to Claim 24, wherein the
2 computer-readable program code means for determining further comprises computer-readable
3 program code means for determining whether the time period of the time-sensitivity has been
4 exceeded; and wherein the computer-readable program code means for requiring is suppressed if
5 the time period of the time-sensitivity has been exceeded.

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